

Review: She Dies Tomorrow

written by Guest Contributor | September 2, 2020



No, I will not risk my life to watch *Tenet* in theaters, unless Christopher Nolan teleports us back to a time before COVID-19. I would rather watch films on my couch at home, thank you very much.

As I scoured Google for a suitable watch this week, I came across *She Dies Tomorrow* and thought, "I'm in the mood for a good horror comedy!" Fortunately or unfortunately for me, I got a more chilling, thought-provoking, depressing, and ballsy film than I expected.

Director Amy Seimertz's *She Dies Tomorrow* initially centers on Amy, played by Kate Lyn Sheil, who remains absolutely certain that she will die, well, tomorrow. She stumbles through her house in a drunken, dreamlike haze while listening to Mozart's "Lacrimosa" – caressing walls, electrocuting insects, and telling her friend Jane, played by Jane Adams, that she wants to be made into a leather jacket. Any sensible person would be concerned about Amy's mental state, but Jane writes her off as overreacting and leaves her alone to her own devices. However, Jane quickly plummets down a similar mental chasm. Jane now feels that she herself will die tomorrow. The thought has now been planted, the virus has spread, and whoever either Jane or Amy tells next will think the same about themselves. What will they do with their remaining time on earth? Timely chaos ensues with no clear light at the end of the tunnel.

Quite an interesting premise, huh? *She Dies Tomorrow* seems tailor-made for 2020, almost to an offensive degree. Seimertz doesn't care about ruffling feathers or making viewers uncomfortable. Her film cares more about posing questions than providing answers, inviting viewers to consider the same dilemmas faced by the characters.

Indeed, *She Dies Tomorrow* is not easy viewing, especially with Seimertz's uncompromising style. Several moments of smirk-inducing comedy aside, the film remains grim from start to finish. This thriller fully embraces the implications of a psychological, anxiety-centered virus and the ways humankind would react – also highlighting the importance of acknowledging that mental illness is real, even if its effects aren't immediately noticeable to outsiders.

Viewers observe the characters as doctors observing lab rats, or school boards observing students, witnessing each character's reaction to the virus. These reactions involve characters' resurfaced regrets, unearthed fears, destroyed relationships, and, in a twisted sense, no-holds-barred approaches

to living. Seimertz eventually turns the camera back on viewers themselves. What would you do if you were going to die tomorrow?

This heavy tone is amplified by Seimertz's filmmaking techniques, which include the deployment of long, hypnotic shots throughout and a color palette featuring both starkly muted and surreally beautiful hues. The acting is also exceptional across the board – especially Sheil, who remains fully committed to a role demanding incredible emotional range. At some points darkly deadpan, other points nerve-shatteringly raw, her performance forces viewers to observe her mental struggles and encourages viewer introspection. Sheil's scenes are made even more impactful when Seimertz plants the camera directly in front of her, allowing Sheil's acting prowess to shine and ground her character in cold, hard reality. The film's plodding pace, on the other hand, won't be to all viewers' tastes and admittedly drags by the end of its 84-minute runtime.

All in all, though I appreciate what Seimertz is attempting, whether her film's hopeless pessimism is beneficial to consume remains debatable. In a time where many of us are likely unsure whether we have COVID-19, or have experienced it first-hand, the anxiety-driven suspense of *She Dies Tomorrow* hits quite close to home – perhaps too close for my liking. This isn't the fault of Seimertz, as the story was created prior to the pandemic. Even so, was some semblance of hope too much to ask for?

We have now arrived, dear readers, at the final verdict. Would this friendly neighborhood movie reviewer recommend *She Dies Tomorrow*? Perhaps. For viewers looking to be disturbed and ready to ponder deeper themes, the film is definitely worth a watch. Just don't expect to have a spring in your step when the end credits roll.

Rating: 3.5/5 Leather Jackets



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